



Recreation Department

PARK COMMISSIONERS

Shirley Canniff
Leslie Mayer
Jen Rothenberg
Phil Lasker
Scott Walker
Josh Fenollosa - Associate
Sarah Carrier- Associate

MEETING NOTICE

The Park and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, October 11, 2022
7:00 PM - REMOTE MEETING via ZOOM

AGENDA

- 1) Open Forum – Public Comment
- 2) Introduction of Teresa Marzilli – Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator
- 3) Capital Project Updates
 - A - Spy and Parmenter Playgrounds
 - B - Robbins Playground Design
 - C – Arlington Reservoir Phase II
 - D - Stratton, Peirce, Bishop ARPA Project
 - E – Hurd Field Project
 - F – Poets Corner
 - G – FY 2024 CPA Requests – Hills Hill, Menotomy, Turkey Hill
- 4) Approval of Minutes – 9/27/2022
- 5) Special Event Approval – N/A
- 6) Comments and Items for Future Meetings:
 - a) Open Space and Recreation Plan
 - b) Historical Commission Discussion - Menotomy Rocks Park
 - c) Off Leash Proposal Parallel Park
- 7) Correspondence Received: Joy Ahearn – (Res Path Bike Riding/Parallel Offleash), Evelyn Ginsparg (Artificial Turf Article), Letters of Support Hills Hill MTB (Several Residents), Hills Hill MTB Concerns (Mike Brown)
- 8) New Business

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.
When: Oct 11, 2022 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcufumhpzggG9Qb0sSEmTORzHHIMoceOY0h>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

September 27, 2022

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday September 27, 2022 at 6:00pm.

Commission Members: Phil Lasker, Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Scott Walker, Sarah Carrier and Josh Fenollosa. Shirley Canniff was not in attendance. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Kate Tooke, Copley Wolff, KZLA, Carlene Scaravaglione, Ryan Whitney, Alan Jones, Michele Meagher, Kelley Damore

Preliminary Matter: Phil Lasker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call and read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Mr. Lasker.

Robbins Farm Landscape Architect Interviews:

Open Forum:

- Ms. Melofchick – Russell St. Requested more information on the design presentations – “What percentage of the design is universal design?” Mr. Lasker stated that the interview process has not been completed and project details are not finalized. Ms. Melofchick encouraged the Commission to “create the first park for children and adults implementing universal design”. She also requested more information on the concrete pad poured behind the back stop at Buzzell Field. Mr. Connelly stated that the concrete pad was poured for the purpose of installing a bike rack.
- Ms. Mayer: Noted that the Commission's efforts to create accessible parks and playgrounds are not new and that the designs have evolved over time. The Commission participated in a study with the Institute of Human Centered Designs. Results can be found on the Recreation website.

Carlene Scaravaglione, OT/Entry Level Doctor of OT Student – Summer Review:

Ms. Scaravaglione, a Tufts University Occupational Therapy Doctoral candidate presented the findings from her project at Club Rec this past summer, “Maximizing Inclusive Recreation Implementation and Evaluation”.

2021 – Conducted an evaluation of Club Rec staff, staff orientation and summer programming.

2022 – A new inclusion director was hired to work at Club Rec and inclusion training was provided at staff orientation and throughout the summer.

Ms. Scaravaglione supported the director, implemented staff training, gathered data from a “pre-post-post survey”, conducted interviews with children at Club Rec and provided additional support to participants and staff.

Findings:

Throughout the summer most staff (ranging from 60-69%) reported feeling an increased comfort level in the following categories.

- Encouraging hesitant participants.
- Modifying activities to support the needs of all participants.

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- Starting activities during downtime.
- Talking with parents and guardians to gain more information about participants' interests and needs.

During morning staff meetings, Ms. Scaravaglione encouraged staff to brainstorm ideas to create a more inclusive environment. She also implemented "Topics of the Week" discussions to educate staff on additional topics related to children.

All data including surveys, interviews and training modules will be shared with Mr. Connelly. Mr. Connelly will forward to the Commission for review.

Ryan Whitney, a former Club Rec participant, staff member and now of Tufts University, stated that the program is now collaborating with the Recreation's Kids Care Afterschool Program.

Request from Friends of Crusher Lot:

Mr. Jones requested that the Commission consider supporting a CPA request for a feasibility study of the Crusher Lot to assess the needs for restoration, rejuvenation and rehabilitation of the small, undeveloped, forested area.

The areas of concern; poorly defined trails, erosion, trash and dumping, invasive species and the premature death of trees resulting from the prior. Ideas for improvement include; woodland classrooms, exercise groups, accessible/universal design, climate change mitigation. Mr. Jones provided a copy of a heat map created by MRWA showing Crusher Lot and Menotomy Rocks Park as the coolest locations in town. This is largely due to the density of trees in each location.

In summary, the group believes that the request meets CPA criteria as it is for a feasibility study of an open space/recreation property and the purpose of the study is for rehabilitation and restoration.

- Ms. Mayer: CPA has already approved a FY22 CPA request submitted by Emily Sullivan in the amount of \$30K for a public land management plan. The study, which is being conducted in collaboration with KZLA and David Morgan, is underway. The hope is that Crusher Lot is also captured in the study. Findings will assist in maintenance requests and recommendations which are not covered by CPA.
- Ms. Garnett: Recommended that Mr. Jones get involved in the study to present concerns which may require additional funding.
- Mr. Connelly: The Commission has a multi-year CPA/Capital plan. While requests are important, it also needs to be determined how the request fits into the current plan. He also recommended further discussion to access other funding to take pressure off CPA.
- Ms. Rothenberg: Thanked Mr. Jones for all his efforts and extended support of the project as it develops.
- Mr. Lasker: Noted that the Friends of Crusher Lot have brought much needed attention to the location. Stated that accessibility is also important to the students accessing the Ottoson Middle School.
- Mr. Fenollosa: Supports the efforts of the Friends group siting the need to address grading and broken paths.

Following the discussion, Mr. Jones withdrew the request. He stated that he would very much like to be involved and will follow up with Mr. Connelly.

Request for Off-Leash Hours at Parallel Park:

Ms. Meagher was unable to attend this evening. Ms. Ann Shildneck spoke in her place.

Ms. Shildneck shared that there was a small group of neighborhood dog owners that met frequently in the mornings at Parallel Park around 7:00am. The owners admitted that they allowed their dogs off leash during these visits as long as there were no other users in the park. The group has stopped taking the dogs off leash after they were reported to Arlington Police.

Ms. Shildneck reported that the group doesn't have a dog park close by and that they help the community by cleaning up the park, cleaning up after other dog owners and believes themselves to be "good stewards of the park".

- Mr. Connelly: The Commission conducted public meetings regarding off leash dog hours for two years before approving off leash dog hours at specific park locations. Parallel Park was not selected due to its proximity to busy streets and concerns of dogs getting out through the lower gate accessing Mystic Valley Parkway.
- Ms. Mayer: Stated that regulations prohibit off leash dogs on courts (basketball, tennis, pickle ball) and in playgrounds. The grassy area at Parallel Park is limited and located on a slope between the playground and basketball court. She also noted that the town leases the property from the state.
- Mr. Lasker: Pointed out that Robbins Farm and Menotomy Rocks Park both have playgrounds and courts on the property but have scheduled off leash dog hours. Ms. Mayer noted the distance between the elements at Robbins and Menotomy is greater than at Parallel Park. It was also mentioned that there has been a significant increase in discussions with APO regarding off leash dog problems and concerns.
- Ms. Rothenberg: Suggested a trial period with limited hours, possibly 7-8:30am. Mr. Connelly shared that to remain consistent with other locations, off leash hours are 6-9am.
- Monique Noelle: Spoke as a Parallel Park abutter stating that she typically frequents the park with her dog between the hours of 7-8:15am and there are very rarely other people at the park. She believes that the size of the grassy area is sufficient because the groups that typically meet at the park are small.
- Mr. Walker: Pointed out potential difficulties in keeping the dogs in the grassy area because it is located between the playground and courts. He also stated that he would support a trial period.
- Ms. Garnett: Worked for DCR in the past. Advised the Commission to contact DCR to avoid potential legal issues. DCR has different off leash dog regulations.
- Mike Bolt: Also spoke as a Parallel Park abutter who feels that the dog owners that frequent the park are very responsible. He also noted that the grassy area is big enough to throw a ball around with the dog without it going into the playground or courts. From his experience, dogs do not go on the courts unless they are being trained as service dogs.

Mr. Connelly said that the off leash by-law was met with significant resistance. It would not have passed Town Meeting without compromise, adding the rules prohibiting off leash dogs from courts and playgrounds. Moving forward with the request would require the Commission to notify abutters of the proposal and schedule a public input session.

Mr. Connelly will contact Town Counsel & DCR this week for more information before taking any further action.

Special Event Request – Spooky Walk:

Ms. Damore presented the special event request to hold the Annual Spooky Walk at Menotomy Rocks Park on Saturday, October 29, 2022 between the hours of 6:30-8pm with a rain date of Sunday, October 30. This will be the first Spooky Walk "post-Covid" and will introduce a new generation of participants to carry on the tradition. Ms. Damore stated that the event organizers are aware of the requirements to hold the event; police detail, single-side of the street parking, no open flame or fire, carry-in/carry-out trash removal and clean up. Mr. Connelly noted that he has the official application at the Recreation office.

The Commission extended their gratitude to the group for hosting the beloved event for so long and appreciation for recognizing the concerning issues from past years.

- Mr. Lasker and Ms. Rothenberg: Questioned how and to what extent the event would be publicized. Ms. Damore stated that she does limit her posting to one Facebook group and shares event details with the

Brackett and Bishop PTOs. She did note that information about the event is spread largely by other Facebook group users who are aware of the event.

Ms. Mayer made a motion to approve the Annual Spooky Walk, with discussed restrictions and safety plans in place, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Walker – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 4-0.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Rothenberg made a motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2022, seconded by Ms. Mayer.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Walker – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 4-0.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings:

Courts assessment discussion.

Open Space plan. Mr. Connelly will add as a future agenda item.

Correspondence Received: Mr. Connelly responded directly to correspondence regarding Spy Pond Playground.

New Business: Menotomy Rocks Park benches will be discussed on October 25. Mr. Connelly will participate in a site walk with Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park to discuss the removal of the green benches, the historical value and integrity of the benches and ADA compliance requirements. Ms. Carrier volunteered to accompany Mr. Connelly on the site walk. Ms. Mayer requested an update on the discussion to add a community garden at McLellan Field. Mr. Connelly has a meeting with the working group in 2 weeks. Ms. Garnett suggested incorporating subtle historical elements in new park and playground designs like those presented this evening. Mr. Fenollosa requested more information on the next steps in choosing a designer. Mr. Connelly will email the Commissioners tomorrow.

Mr. Walker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:04pm, seconded by Ms. Mayer.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES
Ms. Mayer – YES
Mr. Walker – YES
Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 4-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.

From: Joy Ahearn <joyahearn@gmail.com>
To: Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 09/28/2022 09:18 PM
Subject: Riding bikes around the Arlington Res + Parallel Park

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Hi Joe!

I wanted to put in a plug for continuing to allow bike riding around the Arlington Reservoir.

I recall a comment from a Park & Rec meeting from this past spring or summer, something to the effect that bikes might run people over as they are walking around the Res.

I find this a ridiculous and callous comment on the humanity of cyclists like me. I'm mostly a road bike rider, but my friends and I all have gravel bikes also, and ride them about once a week or so. We'll meet at Starbucks in Arlington Heights, head up Mass Ave and take the first right to go into the parking lot for Hurd field, then make our way to the path around the Res. We've really enjoyed watching the transformation, all the work done to remove roots from the pathways, make them wider and passable and safe for everyone. I love a smooth ride on two wheels.

As we ride, we are completely observant and watchful for anything and anyone on any path. Most cyclists I know want to be courteous and safe, calling out "coming up on your left" in a not-too-loud voice. We'll slow to a stop if necessary until passing is safe.

Today I was riding with my friend Bill through Horn Pond and Winchester Fells, and he described an altercation last week as he rode around the Arlington Res. He approached a man walking his dog off leash at 8:55am (so I guess the guy had 5 more minutes to be legal). Bill called out "on your left." The guy moved into Bill's way, stopped, faced him, and told him that bikes weren't allowed on the path. He said that bikes are a danger to children, grandmothers, etc. Bill told him that he was wrong, that there was no rule to that effect, and that he himself was a grandfather, married to a grandmother. It did not end well. Bill got home and researched, and found no rule against bikes using the Res path.

I urge the Commission to continue to allow bikes access to this beautiful pathway around a peaceful area. We get these off-road bikes so that we can

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enjoy the woods, and stay off the streets where the cars can hit us.

RE: Parallel Park. I drive by this park all the time, but never really knew it was there. But today, on our way home from the Winchester Fells, we rode right by Parallel Park. I agree it is small, but I agree with the man who shared that he can give his golden a good run in this park. My golden died six years ago, but we used to throw balls for him in the Ottoson upper baseball field, which seems about the same size as Parallel. It was quite adequate to give a dog a good run. And then you just repeat. Throw, retrieve, repeat. Dog stays healthy and happy; owners do too. I hope you can give the dog owners a trial run!

Thanks,
Joy Ahearn
Cell: 617-460-3118

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From: E G <eginsparg@gmail.com>
To: Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 10/01/2022 10:00 PM
Subject: astroturf in the news

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Hi,

1. I saw these unfortunate articles about artiifical turf and I hope the P&R Commission is aware of these issues --

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/09/24/metro/aging-artificial-turf-fields-may-carry-risk-head-injuries/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/30/boston-bans-artificial-turf-toxic-forever-chemicals-pfas>

2. Is there an email address for emailing to the Commission or is emailing you directly the best choice? I thought it was mentioned in the last meeting but I don't see it listed anywhere,

Evelyn

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From: Brett Riley <bfriley08@gmail.com>
To: "jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us" <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 09/29/2022 08:24 PM
Subject: Re: Mountain biking in Arlington

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Hi Mr. Connelly,

My name is Brett Riley I'm 14 years old and enjoy mountain biking all around the area. I am expressing my support for the Hills Hill Proposal. This is would mean the world to me and my friends. There are many great places to mountain bike around Arlington but not in. Having a place close to everyone would help others learn and start biking. This would have a tremendous impact on the everyone in the town. Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing hobbies/sports in the country. Having a place to reflect that in town would bring happiness to anyone wanting to enjoy the outdoors.

Thanks,
Brett Riley

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From: The Rileys <katemriley@gmail.com>
To: jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 09/29/2022 08:24 PM
Subject: In support of MTB in Arlington

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Hi Mr. Connelly,
My family of 5 (including three teenage boys) love mountain biking. It is something that the 5 of us can do together as a family. We travel all over New England to ride and would really appreciate the opportunity to ride in Arlington.

The mountain biking community is a great community- there to support one another, cheer each other on, and have an utmost respect for the land we ride on.

I also feel that the Hill's Hill project would be a great opportunity for new and younger riders. It would provide a car free and safer space for those starting out.

We are hopeful for this project

Thank you
Kate Riley
Menotomy Rd.

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From: Lori Pescatore <loripescatore@hotmail.com>
To: "jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us" <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 09/26/2022 12:32 PM
Subject: Bike Trail Support

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Hi Joe - We are writing you to send our support for the much needed and fabulous idea to create a space for bike trails. Arlington needs to support our young teens and give them a space to be active outside. Many teens do not have the ability to be a part of organized sports and that can be very limiting for some kids. We are all too focused on providing spaces for these sports but with a bike trail this can open up an area for teens that need their own unique area.

I appreciate your time and hope that will listen to those in this town who would benefit from this bike trail.

Sincerely,

Lori and Michael Pescatore

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From: Emily Ramey <eclaire.ramey@gmail.com>
To: Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 09/23/2022 05:20 PM
Subject: Hills Hill mountain biking trails

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Hi

We live in Arlington and find that we still need to leave Arlington to participate in activities that the kids love. We love mountain biking and want to be able to do it in our own town - think that Hill's Hill is a perfect place for it since it's so accessible for kids on bikes with the path right there.

Thanks,
Emily

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Good Morning,

I would like to submit an email in support of having Mountain Biking Trails in Arlington. We are a town that is made up of a lot kids and families. Mountain biking is a great form of exercise, and it can help improve your mental health in a number of ways. For starters, it can help reduce stress and anxiety. My oldest son spent a lot of time mountain biking during the pandemic . It proved to be a great alternative to playing other traditional sports that were not happening during Covid. He was still able to gain the many benefits that you have when you are on sports teams. Mountain biking encourages teamwork, meeting new people, helping others and gaining self confidence and self discipline.

As a parent and as a social worker I am concerned with the rise of substance abuse and mental health concerns in our youth. I sincerely, believe that this would be a nice addition to our town. Please contact me if there is anything else that I can do to support this cause.

Thank you in advance,
Christy Kiernan
617-818-2401

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

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From: Caleb Saulnier <calebsaulnier@icloud.com>
To: jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 09/22/2022 06:19 PM
Subject: Arlington Mountain Bike Park Development

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Dear Mr. Connelly,

I am writing to you in support of the recent interest in making mountain bike trails in Arlington. I am 16 years old, and I currently go to Arlington High School. I have been mountain biking for 3 years now, and the sport has become a major part of my life. Me and my best friends go mountain biking almost every day, and it has been the most fun I have ever had. Last winter I went to Moab, Utah and rode some of the most incredible mountain biking trails in the world. I am in support of new trails for biking in Arlington because I believe that it could be an amazing place to meet new people, have fun, let everyone improve their skills, and find a new sport that they love. Not only will this be a great opportunity for the massive biking community in Arlington to practice their skills, it will also be a great place to meet more of the community. Personally, I believe that a huge part of the fun that comes with mountain biking is the community that surrounds it. I have met the kindest people I know when I was biking. I sincerely believe that this is one of the most accepting and helpful communities that one could possibly be a part of. I feel like I can rely on the people in this community whenever I need something. A new bike park or small trail system in Arlington could open up that community in a big way. Meeting local people who have the same interests as you can seriously lead to life changes.

Thank you for your time,
Caleb Saulnier.

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From: Jimmy Yan <jimmy.yan@gmail.com>
To: jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: Harrison Yan <harrisonyan09@gmail.com>
Date: 09/22/2022 05:26 PM
Subject: Hills Hill MTB Project

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Hi Joe

Hope all is well. We have heard that alot of opposition is coming in on the Hills Hill MTB project and I figure I will get some notes from my 13 year old that loves MTB to share with you for the commission.

Harrison cc'ed wrote down some bullet points rather than a full email

1. Hills Hill is the closest mtb spot in Arlington for him and his friends
2. Started MTB when I was 8 and it's truly one of the best outdoor activities/sports for me
3. I'm on a MTB team called Afterschool Suspension and Hills Hill enables me to train for my races locally
4. You can enjoy nature on a mountain bike trail just as much as you can hiking, or horseback riding

Thanks for hearing him out

Jimmy

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From: Michael Jacoby Brown <mjbrown246@gmail.com>
To: Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Naomi Bailis <naomibailis@gmail.com>, heather <hmell75@hotmail.com>, Steve Decourcey
Cc: <sdecourcey@town.arlington.ma.us>, townmanager@town.arlington.ma.us, Greg Christiana
<gchristiana@town.arlington.ma.us>, "John D. Leone, Moderator" <jdleone@gmail.com>
Date: 09/15/2022 12:40 PM
Subject: Re: Hills hill mountain bike trails already there

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Thanks, glad you have seen them. I'm no youngster and they seem walkable, and assume mountain bike-able enough for someone on a mountain bike. They are walkable enough for me. I walked them in sneakers. Just saying. With the various needs in Arlington, it hardly seems like a priority, at least to me. Have you or the Rec Commission looked at the Boys and Girls Club? Asked their Director about what needs preserving there? The Boys and Girls Club likely serves more people and kids than any mountain bike trails would. Have you considered that? I think they play a significant role in Arlington Recreation and I know CPA money went to a private church this year, so assume CPA funds could go there. Thanks for your service. Michael

On Thu, Sep 15, 2022 at 12:28 PM Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us> wrote:

Thanks Mike,

I have and although the use by mountain bikers currently exists, and trails have been created, the trails really should be built to a trail industry standard. The trails should take into consideration drainage, accessibility, safety zones, and other factors. It is similar to a path being cut through the woods by dog walkers/nature walks. They exist and people use them but the trails are not conducive to the standards we would want for a public walking trail.

Joseph Connelly, M. Ed.
Director of Recreation
Town of Arlington

Arlington values equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to building a community where everyone is heard, respected, and protected.

From: Michael Jacoby Brown <mjbrown246@gmail.com>
To: Joe Connelly <JConnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: Thu, 15 Sep 2022 12:11:13 -0400
Subject: Hills hill mountain bike trails already there

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